

Belgium, Brussels / WIELS Center for contemporary Arts

AUDIENCE
EUROPE
NETWORK

Summary of project intent

WIELS = contemporary art center located in a diverse popular neighborhood of Brussels. WIELS made the specific choice to work with the communities in the neighborhood (outreach & offering space), thinking "out of the box": setting up actions not directly related to the tasks of an Art Center. Resulting in projects like Camping WIELS, garden plots, project: Zimmerfrei, etc. Bringing the Museum into the neighborhood and the neighborhood into the Museum. As a result WIELS is seen as part of the community, not an alien entity on its soil. People recognize and valorize WIELS!

Case: Camping WIELS (together with Mus-E): 2 artists work together intensely with 2 classes of 2 secondary schools, creating works of art and children sleeping over at the museum before exhibiting their works there in the end.

DIFFICULTIES MET

- ▶ Integration of the project within the overall school-structure
- ▶ Practical problems: some children were not allowed to sleep over at the museum by their parents, as such breaking an intense process before it's final stage
- ▶ Logistical problems: having 40 children sleep over at the museum is quite a task for WIELS staff and for the teachers

RESULTS

- ▶ Overall about 200 children participated in the project
- ▶ Intense process : 10 sessions of 2 hours in 2 different classes each year
- ▶ Impact on participants: 1) increased visibility of themselves and their neighbourhood. 2) re-appropriation of the space in the museum and of the museum within the community. 3) creation of a meeting space and encounters between inhabitants of the neighbourhood, museum staff, children and their parents



"In the past, inhabitants of the neighbourhood did not know the Museum. Now, the children refer to their neighbourhood as where the WIELS museum is. They are proud of it and have incorporated the museum into their community and their day to day reality."

(staff member WIELS Museum)

Belgium, Brussels / WIELS Center for contemporary Arts

AUDIE
NCES
EUROPE
NETWORK



"Through the project we are able to tackle sensitive but important topics with the children, such as housing. Through intense artistic processes we realized that we are able to increase the resilience of young children and improve their openness to society".

(project staff member)

LEARNINGS

- ▶ Creativity can be stimulated through slow and intense processes with young children
- ▶ Through the project children can be stimulated to think about different themes regarding their neighborhood
- ▶ The cultural mix and the importance of bringing people together

FUTURE / TIPS

- ▶ Increase the embedding of the projects in the overall structure of schools. In some schools, teachers are not that easily convinced and if they are, the school in general lacks some interest and follow-up
- ▶ Improve the relationship with the teachers throughout the project, making them more engaged on a personal level and as such ensuring continuity